

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HOOPA VALLEY TRIBE TELLS CONGRESS TRINITY RIVER
RESTORATION PROMISES MUST BE KEPT BEFORE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
RESTORATION IS PASSED**

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Hoopa, Calif. – The Hoopa Valley Tribe of northern California has notified Congressional and administration San Joaquin River restoration supporters of the tribe's concern the plan for the San Joaquin is fiscally gluttonous and could drain restoration funds from the Trinity River, which bisects the Hoopa Valley Reservation.

"They risk killing a living river and the fish in it if the San Joaquin legislation (H.R. 24/S. 27) becomes a new consumer of California's river restoration funding," said Hoopa Tribal Chairman Clifford Lyle Marshall. In an Oct. 23 letter, the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council asked 10 members of California's congressional delegation (list attached at the bottom of this press release) to change the funding mechanism for the San Joaquin River restoration and support legislation authored by Rep. Mike Thompson (H.R. 2733) to ensure the promise of restoration for the Trinity River.

In an Oct. 23 letter, the tribe also notes federal funding shortfalls for the restoration of the Trinity River are allowing fish habitat to worsen. "Our tribal fishery is failing because of a collapse of the fish populations in the Klamath and Trinity rivers," noted Hoopa Tribal Chairman Clifford Lyle Marshall.

The Hoopa Valley Tribal Council sent the letter to key members of Congress saying, "We need your assistance to ensure that the Federal government's prior commitment and trust responsibility for Trinity restoration are not sacrificed to the San Joaquin settlement."

Since the San Joaquin settlement was first introduced in the fall of last year, the tribe has said the legislation's funding mechanism will be used by the administration to divert restoration monies from the Trinity River restoration program approved in December 2000. Congressional representatives, environmental groups, water and power contractors in the Central Valley, and administration officials have asked the Hoopa Valley Tribe not to oppose the San Joaquin legislation. The tribe's letter replies the tribe can only drop opposition to the San Joaquin restoration if funding for the Trinity River restoration is assured with legislation, H.R. 2733, authored by north coast Rep. Thompson and co-sponsored by Rep. George Miller.

Marshall said the federal government betrayed its promises to restore the Trinity River when administration officials refused to support H.R. 2733 during a Sept. 18, House Natural Resources subcommittee hearing on the bill. The tribe supports H.R. 2733 as a way to bolster sagging federal restoration efforts on the Trinity River.

“We support river restoration throughout California, but Congress must recognize the San Joaquin restoration legislation could allow the Interior Department to create a billion-dollar vortex that will suck up available restoration funding for California rivers, including the Trinity.”

Marshall said the Trinity River restoration project is under funded by \$8 million annually and is seven years behind schedule, according to estimates developed this year by the Secretary of the Interior and the tribe. “Shifting limited funds to San Joaquin will reduce funding for Trinity River restoration further,” said Marshall.

“Funding for the Trinity needs to be identified and confirmed now because conditions have worsened for the Trinity and Klamath rivers fishery.” Marshall said the Trinity River is the only tributary to the Klamath River producing quantities of salmon available for local harvest. “If the Trinity River goes down, so goes fishing for native people, sports fishermen and the commercial fishing industry for 900 miles of the Northern California and Oregon coastline. The San Joaquin will take decades to restore. Funding for the Trinity will produce immediate returns on investment and immediate benefits to the coastal communities that rely on the salmon.”

Marshall said the Hoopa Valley Tribe would like to continue talks with Sen. Dianne Feinstein about restoration of the Trinity River. “The Senator has been a friend to the Trinity River in the past. I think she is concerned that the Bureau of Reclamation is only committing half of the money it should on the government’s promise to restore the Trinity River. Congressman Thompson’s Bill will fix the annual funding shortfall. We hope she will introduce the same bill in the Senate.”

The federal government began diverting Trinity River waters to the Central Valley in 1964, but promised enough water would be retained for the river’s fish and wildlife. Since then the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has allowed up to 90 percent of the river’s water to be diverted. In the 1980’s Congress recognized the diversion had caused an 80 percent reduction in salmon populations. In 1992, the Central Valley Project Improvement Act was passed to create funding for environmental restoration of California rivers harmed by commercial water users. In 2000, a Record of Decision agreement signed by the Hoopa Valley Tribe and the U.S. Department of Interior for meeting federal trust responsibilities to restore and maintain the Hoopa Valley Tribe’s fishery. Since then the tribe has had to litigate against Central Valley interests opposed to giving up water for fishery restoration and fight for restoration monies from the BOR.

“The San Joaquin settlement is the latest blow to Trinity River restoration,” said Marshall.

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Feinstein	202 228-3954 or 202 228-4741	202 224-3841
Boxer	415 956-6701	202 224-3553
Radanovich	202 225-3402	202 225-4540
Napolitano	202 225-0027	202 225-5256
Cardoza	202 225-0819	202 225-6131
Costa	202 225-9308	202 225-3341
Baca	202 225-8671	202 225-6161
McNerney	202 226-0861	202 225-1947
Miller	202 225-5609	202 225-2095
Thompson	202 225-4335	202 225-3311

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